



Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Volunteer Job Description

Title: Midewin Frog Monitor

Purpose: All ecological monitors at Midewin play a vital role in monitoring various species and habitats throughout restored and remnant habitats at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. The data collected by monitors is used to evaluate management needs and effectiveness, resulting in better ecological management practices. Frog monitors help directly with part one of our mission to conserve, restore, and enhance the native populations and habitats of fish, wildlife, and plants.

Duties and Responsibilities: Monitors are responsible for their own transportation. Designated wetland sites will be assigned and monitors will be asked to survey 3 sites, at minimum, 3-5 times during the mating season (mid March-late July). Monitors will record all frog species they recognize by their distinctive mating calls. Recording mating calls may be helpful for later identification. Water and air temperature are also recorded. Data sheets, materials and hours of service must be submitted to the volunteer coordinator at the end of monitoring season.

Department and Location: Under the direction of Midewin's Ecologist, volunteer time and data is contributed to Midewin's Restoration Team. Assigned wetland monitoring sites may be anywhere within Midewin's property of 19,000 acres.

Qualifications: Monitors must have a good sense of hearing. Monitors must be willing to learn and recognize 8 mating calls. Frogs and toads are most active at night, so monitors should be available between sundown and 10pm. Most sites require walking over uneven terrain with low visibility. Working with a partner or small group is required. **Volunteers must enter their monitoring data within 48 hours of each survey, as well as enter their hours through Volgistics.** Keys must be returned either at the wrap-up session or by September 1.

Time Commitment: Monitors gain more experience every year and therefore data gets more thorough and accurate, so a multiple year commitment is preferred but not required. Surveys take place between sundown and 10pm, however scouting the sites in daylight hours is highly recommended. Monitors are asked to survey their 3 assigned sites, at minimum, 3-5 times over the mating season (mid March-late July). These surveys should be spread over the full season. Each survey requires 10 minutes of recording time plus time for proper water and air temperature readings. Monitors seem to spend 1-2 hours each visit depending on the location of their sites.

Training: All monitors are required to complete Midewin's in-house orientation that will cover safety, protocols, and available training materials. This usually takes place in early March, meeting at the Welcome Center. New monitors may choose to partner with a more experienced monitor until they are comfortable taking on a site of their own. However this program was designed to accommodate a 'learn as you go' approach, so amateurs are certainly welcome.

A good website resource is at Chicago Wilderness Habitat Project: <http://www.habitatproject.org/frogsurvey/chicagoland.html>

Working Conditions/Physical Effort: *Monitors are covered by the Volunteer Agreement (Form 301a) while monitoring frogs on their assigned sites, or assisting another frog monitor, during frog mating season. Monitors are also covered while scouting their sites during daylight hours.* Monitors may work in variable conditions including:

- Exposure to outdoor weather conditions & allergens
- Working after dark with low visibility
- Walking on uneven, possibly wet terrain and/or through tall vegetation and near standing water
- May be working near hazardous plants or insects as well as wildlife

Benefits: Frog monitors have the unique experience to witness Midewin's nightlife. Volunteer monitors further the citizen scientist movement by contributing valuable data. Monitors can observe long-term progress towards the ecological restoration of Midewin. Midewin's volunteer staff receives ongoing recognition from their supervisor and other staff. Volunteers that contribute 6 or more hours are invited to an annual volunteer recognition banquet in November (policy currently under review). Midewin's volunteer staff receives the bimonthly Prairie Telegraph. Volunteers may be featured in the telegraph, newspaper articles and/or US Forest Service success stories. Awards can be received for outstanding, innovative and/or long term, core volunteers.

Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator about this opportunity.